

## SHORT NOTES.

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### Precocious Coco-nuts.

Mr. A. B. Stephens sends the following note on an aberrant Coco-nut.

It may interest some of the readers of your Botanical Notes to hear of the following freak of nature regarding a very young Coco-nut plant which I saw on my visit to the Yam Seng Estate, Perak. The nut was received amongst a great number of others on the 10th May 1897, and was laid out in the usual way with them. This particular nut only sent out a few small crinkly leaves of about 15 inches in height, but they are apparently coming from two stems, and from one of them there are no less than five fruit fronds, four of which are barren, but the fifth has ten beautifully formed small coco-nuts on it. Unfortunately the plant was pulled up and removed to the overseer's house on 23rd November, and it has considerably dried up, but it has been put out again and has a green shoot on it, so that possibly further developments may yet be seen. It must surely be almost a record for a nut to send out fruit fronds and actually bear nuts in six months and thirteen days.

*A. B. Stephens.*

Certainly this is a most remarkable monstrosity, and I can find no record of anything of the kind, but about a year ago a Chinaman brought to the Gardens in Singapore as a great curiosity a somewhat similar specimen. The nut was still attached to the plant, which bore the ordinary young leaves, from between which was protruded the portion of an inflorescence consisting of two short branches, the longest about six inches long, the other much shorter, which both bore the ordinary flowers. Naturally I thought at first it might be a hoax, such as the Chinese have long been famous for, but I carefully examined it and satisfied myself that the flower spikes really were attached in the axils of the leaves. The owner was anxious to sell it at the

price of 100 dollars. It would be very interesting to work out the anatomy of such curious phenomena as these. It is possible that the flower spikes were formed in the ovary long before, something after the manner of a monstrosity sometimes met with among the cruciferae (Mustard, and Turnip), where the fruit has been found to contain flowers instead of seed, but it seems more likely that it is a case of extreme precocity, where the young plant for some reason has begun to flower years before it might be expected to.

H. N. R.

### **The White-winged Bat in Singapore.**

The very curious and beautiful white-winged bat, *Taphozous affinis*, hitherto only known from Labuan and Sumatra, proves also to be an inhabitant of Singapore, a specimen having been captured at light in the Botanic gardens after a heavy storm of rain. It is a fairly large bat, the head and back of a deep brown colour, with a few white spots on the head, and the whole of the chest and abdomen covered with beautiful silky white fur. The wings at the base are black, gradually passing into white, so that the greater part of the membrane is white. The animal is also remarkable for the tail, which is rather long, passing through the membrane connecting the feet, (a character common to the group of bats to which it belongs, but of this group we have very few species here), and another remarkable peculiarity is the possession of a small pouch beneath the chin, the use of which is by no means clear.

It is possible that this bat is not so rare here as might be supposed from this being the first recorded capture in the Malay Peninsula, as I have seen several very light-coloured bats flying over the reservoir, which looked suspiciously like the white-winged bat.

### ***Hylea puera* cram.**

While travelling in the Dindings and Province Wellesley in the spring of 1897, I was struck by the appearance of the mangrove swamps near Prai and along the Bruas river, whole patches of which were absolutely bare of leaves, and looked as if they had been burnt. In some spots miles of trees were quite leafless, while in others only isolated patches were at-